



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** October 22, 2020

**Agenda Item:** 2021 Annual Work Plan for Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

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## **Background:**

In January 2013, the commission endorsed elk management recommendations from a citizen working group for use in areas with brucellosis (the Designated Surveillance Area as described by the Montana Department of Livestock). Annual work plans describe specific management actions based upon these recommendations. The proposed 2021 annual work plan includes the same aspects as the 2020 plan to include hazing, limited fencing, limited lethal removal of elk, habitat modifications, and other efforts to move elk away from cattle at small scales to reduce the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle. The proposed 2021 plan maintains previous landownership and date descriptions clarifying where and when elk may be lethally removed to move elk away from cattle. The proposed number of elk that may be taken is unchanged from 2020.

## **Public Involvement Process:**

The department accepted public comment on the proposed annual work plan during Aug. 13 through Sept. 14, 2020. The scheduled meeting of the Brucellosis Working Group on July 8, 2020, was postponed, and the inability to hold an in-person meeting of the group precluded any formal input, although the working group was supportive of the plan last year. Two comments from the public were received: one supportive and one expressing concern for elk population management.

## **Alternatives and Analysis:**

The commission may choose to amend the work plan, although public and agency comment is supportive of the plan as presented, which is unchanged from the proposed plan.

## **Agency Recommendation and Rationale:**

The department recommends approval of the proposed 2021 Annual Work Plan for Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis to reduce or mitigate the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle.

## **Proposed Motion:**

I move that the commission vote to approve the proposed 2021 Annual Work Plan for Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis as proposed by the department.